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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7331  
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TAGS: KMDR OPRC OIIP ETRD BR  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA: PAKISTAN,  
GOVERNANCE; SCO PAULO

"Pakistani Knot"

Liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo (8/13) editorialized: "Political instability in Pakistan has made the US make contingency plans for a possible fall of dictator Pervez Musharraf. Washington's main concerns are the fight against terrorism and control over the Pakistani nuclear arsenal. Allied to Bush, Musharraf is currently facing a long list of problems.... Adding to such problems the dispute with the Judiciary, which has made increasingly uncertain his plans to obtain another presidential term and maintain himself as the chief of the Armed Forces, we have an explanation for the rumors that Musharraf may decree a state of emergency. Apparently he did not do so last week because of Secstate Condoleezza Rice's intense pressure.... So far there is no sign that Musharraf may be overthrown, but his situation is not a tranquil one. He has the loyalty of the Army's lay officers, but not that of the troops, which, as the majority of the population, are made up of religious people who look with suspicion upon the alliance with the US and hesitate to repress Islamic radicals."

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